



REMEMBERING  
**RONALD REAGAN**

1911 - 2004

House Republican Conference  
Deborah Pryce, Chairman





# **The Gipper's Influence on America and the World**

## *A Salute to Four Tenets of President Reagan's Lasting Legacy*



### **Economic Growth Through Lower Taxes**

- President Reagan, the father of Reaganomics – lower taxes, sound money, and less regulation – arrived in office in 1981, launching the boldest economic plan since Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal.
- He unveiled his "program for economic recovery" to a Joint Session of Congress, calling for \$41.4 billion in cuts – the largest in U.S. history. He also called for a 30 percent tax cut over three years, an increase in defense expenditures, and vowed not to cut Social Security.
- Garnering support from Members of Congress from every grade of the political spectrum, President Reagan's proposal for a three-stage tax cut was approved by Congress and led to the longest period of peacetime growth in U.S. history.
- In 1981, there were 14 income brackets with a top rate of 70 percent. By 1989, as President Reagan left office, only two income brackets existed with a top rate of 28 percent.
- In 1986, President Reagan streamlined the income tax code, which did away with unnecessary deductions and exempted millions of low-income Americans.
- In addition, President Reagan supported Federal Reserve Chairman Paul Volcker's tight monetary policies, which brought inflation under control after a severe recession.

### **Proper Limits of Government Through Deregulation**

- President Reagan knew the key to restoring American confidence and self-motivation was to eliminate red tape and scale back government presence,

- thus tearing down the barriers to enterprise and encouraging individualism and a spirit of self-starting.
- By pushing for deregulation of the financial industry and free-trade pacts, President Reagan was a pioneer in bringing about globalization and encouraging competition.
- In 1981, President Reagan took bold steps to end the era of powerful labor unions when he fired 13,000 air traffic controllers for an illegal strike.
- Over the years he summed up his lean government philosophy in a slogan: "Government is not the solution to our problem. Government is the problem."

## **Peace Through Strength**

- After years of crumbling patriotism and a loss of respect for our troops, President Reagan made a return to the pre-Vietnam days of faith in our military and a recommitment of American pride in the efforts of our servicemen and women.
- From the beginning of his presidency, President Reagan realized that the cost to our country of inaction and weakness in the face of Soviet defiance and nuclear threat greatly outweighed the cost of increasing our defense budget.
- Through a series of defense budgets, President Reagan increased defense spending 35 percent during his two terms.
- President Reagan refused to accept Communism's claim of moral superiority.
- Although he shocked the world by calling the Soviet Union an "Evil Empire," President Reagan managed to negotiate the first U.S.-Soviet treaty to reduce the number of nuclear weapons through a series of four summits with Gorbachev.
- In what is often remembered as one of his most defining moments and the culmination of his staunch anti-Communist platform, President Reagan, in a speech at the Brandenburg Gate, asked Gorbachev to bring down the Berlin Wall: "General Secretary Gorbachev, if you seek peace, if you seek prosperity for the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, if you seek liberalization: Come here to this gate! Mr. Gorbachev, open this gate! Mr. Gorbachev, tear down this wall!"
- On November 9, 1989 the Berlin Wall fell, symbolizing the end of the Cold War.

## **Patriotism Through A Return to the American Dream**

- Recovering from the many setbacks of the 1970s, President Reagan led the country to resume its role as the strategic Western leader with the ability to

- fight for principles, stand up to challenges, and overcome hardships with optimism and opportunity.
- President Reagan restored America's can-do self-creed. He rallied the American people with his "Morning in America" slogan to regain confidence in their nation and trust that things were getting better – a sentiment that economic and social indicators would eventually confirm.
  - He proclaimed America as a place where "everyone can rise as high and as far as his ability will take him," and referred to his own humble beginnings as proof.
  - In a farewell address, he said those of his generation "were taught, very directly, what it means to be an American. And we absorbed, almost in the air, a love of country and an appreciation of its institutions."
  - President Reagan planted democracy in regions of the world that have never tasted the joys of freedom. He swept up a downtrodden America with little response to or respect for leadership and reenergized their faith in freedom, the Presidency, and our military. He taught all Americans and newly liberated people across the globe that hard work and faith in God could result in prosperity, a sense of satisfaction in one's own legacy, and a better outlook for tomorrow.

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## Ronald Wilson Reagan---1911-2004

*“Lifeguard, athlete, movie star, governor, president...”*

**1911**—Ronald Wilson Reagan born in Tampico, Illinois on February 6.

**1927**—Begins working seven days a week as a lifeguard. He cumulatively saved 77 lives and as a plaque erected in his honor.

**1932**—Graduates from Eureka College with degrees in Economics and Sociology.

**1937**—Signs a seven-year contract with Warner Bros. paying \$200 a week.

**1940**—Marries actress Jayne Wyman.

**1941**—Daughter Maureen Elizabeth is born on January 24.

**1945**—Adopted son Michael Edward is born on March 18.

--U.S. Army discharges Reagan with the rank of Captain. His poor eyesight keeps him from combat and is assigned to make military training films.

**1947**—Elected president of the Screen Actors Guild; holds this position seven times.

**1949**—Divorces Jane Wyman.

**1952**—Marries Nancy Davis on March 4.

--Daughter Patricia Ann is born on October 21.

**1958**—Son Ronald (Skip) Prescott is born on May 20.

**1962**—Registers as a Republican after years as a staunch Democrat.

**1964**—Takes office as governor of California on January 6.

**1975**—Leaves office after serving two terms as governor of California.

**1980**—Wins New Hampshire primary on February 26.

--Accepts the Republican nomination for president on July 17.

--Beats Jimmy Carter by landslide on November 4. He wins 44 states in general election, and Republicans gain control of the Senate for the first times since 1964.

**1981**—Inaugurated as America's 40<sup>th</sup> president on January 20th. Same day, Iran releases the 52 remaining hostages held at the U.S. Embassy in Tehran for 444 days, while Carter was president.

--John W. Hinkley Jr. attempts to assassinate the president on March 30.

--Proposes three-stage tax cut, biggest in U.S. history on July 29.

**1983**—Reagan says that the U.S.S.R. was the “focus of evil in the modern world.”

--Chosen by *Time* magazine, along with Soviet Premier Yuri Andropov, as “Men of the Year”.

**1984**—Reelected in 49-state landslide on November 6.

**1986**—Signs legislation making Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday a national holiday.

**1987**—At Brandenburg Gate asks Gorbachev to raze Berlin Wall. “Mr. Gorbachev, tear down this wall!”

**1988**—Visits Soviet Union for the first time.

**1989**—Gives farewell address to nation.

**1992**—Speaks at Republican National Convention in Houston.

**1994**—Publicly announces that he is afflicted with Alzheimer's disease on November 2<sup>nd</sup>.

**1998**—Name of National Airport in Washington, D.C. officially changes to Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport.

**2003**—USS Ronald Reagan is commissioned in Norfolk, Virginia on July 12.

**2004**—Ronald Reagan dies in his California home at the age of 93 on June 5.



## Reagan In His Own Words

June 5, 2004

(Source: Fox News)

*Nicknamed "the Great Communicator," Ronald Reagan was both one of the best political orators of the 20th Century and a self-deprecating wit. Following is a collection of some classic Reaganisms.*

- "I did turn 75 today -- but remember, that's only 24 Celsius."
- "It's true hard work never killed anybody, but I figure, why take the chance?"
- "A friend of mine was asked to a costume ball a short time ago. He slapped some egg on his face and went as a liberal economist."
- To wife Nancy after John Hinckley, Jr.'s 1981 assassination attempt: "Honey, I forgot to duck."
- During a 1984 debate with Walter Mondale: "I'm not going to exploit, for political purposes, my opponent's youth and inexperience."
- "You can tell a lot about a fellow's character by his way of eating jellybeans."
- "Politics is supposed to be the second oldest profession. I have come to realize that it bears a very close resemblance to the first."
- In testing the microphone for his weekly radio address, Reagan declared, "My fellow Americans, I'm pleased to tell you today I've just signed legislation which outlaws Russia forever. The bombing begins in five minutes."
- "Mr. Gorbachev, open this gate. Mr. Gorbachev, tear down this wall."
- "Mr. President," TV reporter Sam Donaldson yelled out at Reagan after a 1982 press conference, "In talking about the continuing recession tonight,

you have blamed the mistakes of the past and you've blamed Congress. Does any of the blame belong to you?" Reagan responded, "Yes, because for many years I was a Democrat."

- "Now, so there will be no misunderstanding, it's not my intention to do away with government. It is rather to make it work -- work with us, not over us; to stand by our side, not ride on our back. Government can and must provide opportunity, not smother it; foster productivity, not stifle it."
- "Well, this administration's objective will be a healthy, vigorous, growing economy that provides equal opportunity for all Americans, with no barriers born of bigotry or discrimination."
- "Above all we must realize that no arsenal or no weapon in the arsenals of the world is so formidable as the will and moral courage of free men and women."
- "I hope you're all Republicans," he told doctors who were about to operate on his bullet wounds.
- "Did we forget that government is the people's business, and every man, woman and child becomes a shareholder with the first penny of taxes paid?"
- "We do not have a trillion dollar debt because we haven't taxed enough. We have a trillion dollar debt because we spend too much."
- "But with these considerations firmly in mind, I call upon the scientific community in our country, those who gave us nuclear weapons, to turn their great talents now to the cause of mankind and world peace, to give us the means of rendering these nuclear weapons impotent and obsolete."
- "Abortion is advocated only by persons who themselves have been born."
- "Politics is a very rewarding profession. If you succeed there are many rewards, if you disgrace yourself you can always write a book."
- "America is too great for small dreams."
- "We will always remember. We will always be proud. We will always be prepared, so we can always be free."
- "Government growing beyond our consent had become a lumbering giant, slamming shut the gates of opportunity, threatening to crush the very roots of our freedom."

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## How I Came to Trust Reagan, Too

Column By Mikhail Gorbachev

*June 7, 2004*

I have just sent to Nancy Reagan a letter of condolence for the passing of Ronald Reagan. The 40th president of the United States was an extraordinary man who in his long life saw moments of triumph, who had his ups and downs and experienced the happiness of true love.

It so happened that his second term as president coincided with the emergence of a new Soviet leadership — a coincidence that may seem accidental but that was in effect a prologue to momentous events in world history.

Ronald Reagan's first term as president had been dedicated to restoring America's self-confidence. He appealed to the traditions and optimism of the people, to the American dream, and he regarded as his main task strengthening the economy and the military might of the United States. This was accompanied by confrontational rhetoric toward the Soviet Union, and more than rhetoric — by a number of actions that caused concern both in our country and among many people throughout the world. It seemed that the most important thing about Reagan was his anti-communism and his reputation as a hawk who saw the Soviet Union as an "evil empire."

Yet his second term as president emphasized a different set of goals. I think he understood that it is the peacemakers, above all, who earn a place in history. This was consistent with his convictions based on experience, intuition and love of life. In this he

was supported by Nancy — his wife and friend, whose role will, I am sure, be duly appreciated.

At our first meeting in Geneva in 1985 I represented a new, changing Soviet Union. Of course, the new Soviet leadership could have continued in the old ways. But we chose a different path, because we saw the critical problems of our country and the urgent need to step back from the edge of the abyss to which the nuclear arms race was pushing mankind.

The dialogue that President Reagan and I started was difficult. To reach agreement, particularly on arms control and security, we had to overcome mistrust and the barriers of numerous problems and prejudices.

I don't know whether we would have been able to agree and to insist on the implementation of our agreements with a different person at the helm of American government. True, Reagan was a man of the right. But, while adhering to his convictions, with which one could agree or disagree, he was not dogmatic; he was looking for negotiations and cooperation. And this was the most important thing to me: He had the trust of the American people.

In the final outcome, our insistence on dialogue proved fully justified. At a White House ceremony in 1987, we signed the intermediate-range nuclear forces treaty, which launched the process of real arms reduction. And, even though we saw the road to a world free of nuclear weapons differently, the very fact of setting this goal in 1986 in Reykjavik helped to break the momentum of the arms race.

While addressing these vital tasks, we changed the nature of relations between our two countries, moving step by step to build trust and to test it by concrete deeds. And in the process, we — and our views — were changing, too. I believe it was not an accident that during his visit to Moscow in 1988 Reagan said, in reply to a reporter's question, that he did not regard the perestroika-era Soviet Union as an evil empire.

I think that the main lesson of those years is the need for dialogue, which must not be broken off whatever the challenges and complications we have to face. Meeting with Reagan in subsequent years, I saw that this was how he understood our legacy to the new generation of political leaders.

The personal rapport that emerged between us over the years helped me to appreciate Reagan's human qualities. A true leader, a man of his word and an optimist, he traveled the journey of his life with dignity and faced courageously the cruel disease that darkened his final years. He has earned a place in history and in people's hearts.

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*Gorbachev is the former president of the Soviet Union. This article was translated from Russian by Pavel Palazhchenko.*



## **A Daughter's Remembrance: The Gemstones of Our Years**

*Time taught me to appreciate a distant father—  
and cherish glimpses of an elusive soul*

*Newsweek Column by Patti Davis*

The house I grew up in had large plate-glass windows, which birds frequently crashed into headfirst. My father helped me assemble a bird hospital, consisting of a few shoe boxes, some old rags and tiny dishes for water and food. When I lost my first patient, when the tiny gray creature died in my hands without ever eating any of the Cheerios I'd provided for it, my father patiently explained to me that the bird was free now, flying happily through the blue breezes of heaven, where there are no hazards such as windows. I was locked into his eyes, locked into the story. My father was always more accessible when he was teaching his children through stories.

Thirty-five years later, I would walk beside him along the beach, after he had already begun slipping into the shadows of Alzheimer's. A dark thief, it steals portions of a person, leaves remnants behind. He looked up at a flock of seagulls soaring overhead and his eyes followed them, shining with something I couldn't decipher, but which I interpreted as longing.

The years between those two events were often war-torn, weighed down with sorrow—with words he found difficult to say and words I wish I'd never said.

My father was a shy man; he wasn't demonstrative with his children. His affection didn't announce itself with strong embraces or dramatic declaration. We had to interpret it. Like delicate

calligraphy, it required patience and a keen eye, attributes I had to acquire. I was not born with them.

Eventually, I grew beyond the girl who wanted more from her father than he was able to give. I began to focus on the gifts he gave me. He taught me to talk to God, to read the stars, respect the cycles of nature. I am a strong swimmer and a decent horsewoman because of him. I plucked from the years the shiniest memories, strung them together. It's what you do with someone who is always a bit out of reach. You content yourself with moments; you gather them, treasure them. They are the gemstones of the years you shared.

I returned to my family, the prodigal child, in October 1994, two months before my father disclosed to the world that he had been diagnosed with Alzheimer's. It's been reported that his disease brought us back together. That's not quite true—it happened earlier, when my mother and I laid down the armaments of our long dispiriting war, allowing the rest of the family to breathe easier, drift toward one another. But the chronology doesn't really matter; the coming together does. I returned in time to say goodbye to my father, to witness his steady withdrawal from this world.

Losing a parent is an experience that has no comparison. Like childbirth, it exists beyond the realm of language: our words strive, but never completely describe it. At first, grief carries you out like a tide to an ending you always knew would come, but couldn't possibly be prepared for. With a long, relentless illness like Alzheimer's, you remember every detail of the journey, every slow mile you traveled

Hope dies along the way—the hope that things will someday change between you and your parent; you'll be less hesitant, perhaps, with each other, more open. During the last couple of years, I would sit beside my father, silence floating between us, knowing that we would never be any more to each other than we were right then.

I don't know whether the loss is easier or harder if a parent is famous; maybe it's neither. My father belonged to the country. I resented the country at times for its demands on him, its ownership of him. America was the important child in the family, the one who got the most attention. It's strange, but now I find comfort in sharing him with an entire nation. There is some

solace in knowing that others were also mystified by him; his elusiveness was endearing, but puzzling. He left all of us with the same question: who was he? People ask me to unravel him for them, as if I have secrets I haven't shared. But I have none, nothing that you don't already know. He was a man guided by internal faith. He knew our time on this earth is brief, yet he cared deeply about making his time here count. He was comfortable in his own skin. A disarmingly sunny man, he remained partially in shadow; no one ever saw all of him. It took me nearly four decades to allow my father his shadows, his reserve, to sit silently with him and not clamor for something more.

I have learned, over time, that the people who leave us a little bit hungry are the people we remember most vividly. When they are alive, we reach for them; when they die, some part of us follows after them. My father believed in cycles—the wheel of birth, and life, and death, constantly turning. My hand was tiny when he held it in his and led me to a blackened field weeks after a fire had burned part of our ranch. He showed me green shoots peeking out of the ashes. New life. I let go of his hand for too long, pushed it away, before finally grasping it again, trusting that even in his dying, I would find new life.



## Reagan Seen Plain

### *He changed the world*

*National Review Online Column by Michael Ledeen*

Washington is rarely so hypocritical as when a great man dies, and so we are hearing that in Reagan's time, politics were more genteel. The nastiness of today is said to have come later, presumably during the recent unpleasantness having to do with the impeachment of Clinton. But it is not so. Reagan was subjected to the same personal vilification as Bush is today, and was called many of the same names: stupid, unprepared, a puppet of more clever people, an ideologue, and so forth. Reagan was often said to be unable to deliver a coherent English sentence without an index card to read from. And the media were desperate to defeat him. In fact, a few days before his triumphant reelection in 1984, James Reston of the *New York Times* wrote that never before had so many journalists, editors, producers, and broadcasters done so much to defeat a candidate as they had to defeat Reagan, but alas they had failed. You can't ask for a better source than that.

Reagan had the last laugh, both in the election and in the war against the Soviet Empire. In all likelihood, the stereotype that the intelligentsia created — the fool in the White House — worked to his advantage, because it gave him more room to do what he did best: defeat his enemies, and do it with grace, wit, and modesty. And in the process, he exceeded his own expectations. Not only did he destroy the Soviet Empire, but he launched a global democratic revolution that transformed the political universe.

Pope John Paul II understood this (he and Reagan, more than anyone else, were the two men who changed the world), and sent a subtle message to President Bush the day before Reagan died. If you read the full text of the pope's statement to Bush, instead of the one phrase taken out of context and then deconstructed by the media, you will find that the pontiff asked the president to give warm

regards to the Reagans. No other American president was mentioned. I will always believe that that was John Paul's way of saying to Bush, "be Reagan's heir, not your father's son." President Bush can advance Reagan's democratic revolution, and I think the pope was encouraging him to do it.

The Left truly hates Reagan, and those who worked with him, because he demonstrated the emptiness of their greatest conceit: that the ideals embodied in the Communist revolution were both just and destined to triumph. The Leftist intelligentsia will never forgive him and his people for destroying the Soviet Empire, and they still strive desperately to pretend that he didn't do it. But it won't work.

Reagan also drove his critics crazy because they couldn't get to him with their usual methods. He wasn't interested in winning the "strange new respect" award for erstwhile conservatives who adopt Leftist causes. He didn't want to go teach at the Kennedy School at Harvard. He could care less about his clippings in *The New York Review of Books*. And he'd rather be alone with Nancy than attend a power dinner at Mrs. Graham's house. He knew who he was, he was entirely comfortable with that knowledge, and he didn't want to be one of them.

That's the source of the inner strength that made him one of our four greatest presidents. He joins Washington, Lincoln, and FDR in the pantheon of American political leaders who fundamentally changed the world.